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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2021, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with time equally allocated between the parties and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

RECOGNIZING RION-BOWMAN VFW POST

The SPEAKER. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. CLINE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLINE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the Rion-Bowman VFW Post in Harrisonburg, Virginia, which recently celebrated its 100th anniversary.

Founded in 1921, VFW Post 632 was the first Veterans of Foreign War chapter founded in the Shenandoah Valley and is one of the oldest in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Combat veterans of every conflict since World War I have called this post home, and it has been led by 73 dedicated commanders over the years.

Current Senior Vice Commander Christopher Rexrode noted the significance of celebrating this milestones during the pandemic, which has forced far too many veterans' clubs across the country to close. He is thankful his post has been able to keep its doors open and continue to serve as a place for veterans to gather, connect, and share experiences and comradery on a daily basis.

Congratulations to VFW Post 632 on this great achievement, and I wish them another 100 years of success.

LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. ESHOO). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in the name of liberty and justice for all. I rise in the name of liberty and justice for all because the criminal justice system is on trial. It is on trial in the court of world opinion. It is on trial for crimes committed against human beings in this country.

Some of the complainants would include Eric Garner, Tamir Rice, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd.

I rise in the name of liberty and justice for all because we have reached a point in our history wherein there is one case now that seems to have reached the pinnacle of the system, such that everyone is waiting to see how this case will eventually address liberty and justice for all.

One of the complaints is that in this country we have allowed arresting officers, that we confer enormous power on, literally, the power to execute when necessary.

But the question is: Will these arresting officers not only have the power to arrest, but also the power to be judge, jury, prosecutor, and executioner?

This is the question before the court of world opinion.

We have a case that embraces decades, perhaps even centuries of misdeeds. My hope is that we will receive a just ruling. My prayer is that, if there is not a just ruling, we will have peaceful protests. I believe in peaceful protests. I have gone to jail participating in peaceful protests. I have gone to jail with John Lewis participating in peaceful protests. Twice, he and I were jailed together.

So I rise in the name of liberty and justice for all, understanding that we have an opportunity now to demonstrate to the world that we will not allow an arresting officer to be judge, jury, prosecutor, and executioner. But I also understand, given the history of this country, unfortunately, that things don't always work out as I believe they should.

So my hope is that there will be peaceful protests, but I do hope that the protests will take place if there is not a just verdict. There is nothing wrong with peaceful protests in this country. There is nothing wrong with confronting injustice in this country. There is nothing wrong with standing up for the rights of those who are being denied liberty and justice for all in this country.

I want to see peaceful protests if the wrong verdict is rendered. And, in my opinion, the verdict that we should have is arresting officers can't be judge, jury, prosecutor, and executioner. There are those who would say that I don't have the right to come to these conclusions at this time, and they are wrong.

In the court of public opinion, world opinion, many have already come to this same conclusion. I am merely echoing what they have said. As such, I am a messenger, and the message is: Let's pray for a just decision in the court of world opinion.

HONORING THE LIFE OF JUDGE HARRY WALKER WELLFORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. KUSTOFF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. KUSTOFF. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and legacy of Judge Harry Walker Wellford, who passed away Saturday, April 17.

Judge Wellford was a third-generation Memphian, who dedicated his life to serving his community through the

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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justice system, and also dedicated his life to his family.

Judge Wellford started serving his community in our great country at a young age. Like so many of his generation, the Greatest Generation, Harry served our Nation fighting in the Pacific theater during World War II. After serving our Nation overseas, Harry Wellford returned to his home State of Tennessee to obtain his law degree from Vanderbilt University.

In the 1960s, a turbulent time for our Nation and for Memphis, Harry Wellford was an active member of the biracial Memphis Relations Committee, serving for the betterment of the Memphis community.

It was during this time that Harry Wellford became politically active, leading the west Tennessee efforts for Howard Baker's campaign for the United States Senate; and then, in 1970, managing the Statewide campaign for his good friend, Winfield Dunn, to become Governor of Tennessee.

Harry had a good and successful law practice and was well-regarded in the legal community. It was for these reasons that Harry was nominated for a Federal judgeship in 1970 by then-President Richard Nixon. Judge Wellford was unanimously confirmed as district court judge. Later, President Ronald Reagan nominated Judge Wellford for the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, to which he was confirmed.

Judge Wellford had a long and distinguished career on the bench. A good friend of Judge Wellford was Judge Julia Gibbons, who currently serves on the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals and, in 1982, replaced Judge Wellford on the district court when he was elevated to the appellate court. Commenting on him yesterday, Judge Gibbons said: Harry Wellford was one of the people we most admire to become; he was my friend; his touch with people emanated in everything he did in life.

Madam Speaker, Harry and his wife, Katherine, were members of Idlewild Presbyterian Church before she passed away. They loved to travel, and he enjoyed spending his free time playing tennis and golf. Despite being a well-distinguished judge and a political reformer for the State of Tennessee, what mattered most to Harry was his family.

Judge Wellford's favorite song was "Eternal Father Strong to Save," more commonly known as "The Navy Hymn." So appropriate for him and for his generation.

Indeed, Harry Wellford will be sorely missed by all who knew him. Today, Roberta and I are thinking about Harry and his five children: Harry, Jr.; Beasley; Buck; Kate; and Allison.

Harry Wellford, thank you for your service to our great Nation.

THE EXONERATED FIVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. ESPAILLAT) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ESPAILLAT. Madam Speaker, yesterday, April 19, marked the 32nd anniversary of a terrible assault, a sexual assault in Central Park that marked the history and marked really the story of New York City.

But it was also one that resulted in the wrongful arrest and conviction of five young Black and Latino boys for a crime that they did not commit. For years, they were known as the Central Park Five. But after years of injustice and now long after being exonerated, they are now known as the Exonerated Five.

These young men were minors. They were really young boys who were innocent of every single crime they were charged of, and still spent from 6 to 13 years behind bars. They have faced a horrendous story.

They have names. They have faces. They have first names and last names, and they are: Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Yusef Salaam, Raymond Santana, and Korey Wise. They will be here in the Capitol, Madam Speaker, tomorrow.

Each one of these young men were deprived of their childhoods, of their innocence, and, most important, of their future. Racial bias and bigotry were at the crux of these young men being deprived of their civil liberties. It is an old tale.

These young men aren't alone in their stories. They are the stories of so many young Black men, Brown men, and Black and Brown young women in our country. As we brace for a court decision, Madam Speaker, they will be visiting the Capitol as free men tomorrow.

But this isn't a story just of misfortune. It is also a story of resilience, the resilience of little boys who were turned into men far too soon; the resilience of a community that never stopped fighting for justice, including grassroots organizing and Council Member Bill Perkins; and the resilience of those that continue to fight today, continue to fight for change, and continue to fight for a new just criminal justice system.

This is an opportune debate, Madam Speaker, as we brace for a court decision that we hope will be just and that the Nation will be in peace; a criminal justice system that, today, often criminalizes far too many Black and Brown young people.

We see stories like theirs replay in the evening news each and every day. So we must never forget. When we see another Black and Brown young man being targeted, pulled over, handcuffed, shot to death in the street, knees on their necks, all while they are innocent, we know that this is not justice.

That is why we need to continue in our fight transforming policing in our country. We know that is not justice. We cannot allow law enforcement to get away with use of excessive force on many young people across this country and ruining their futures. We know that is not justice.

End the choke hold. End the no-knock warrants. Transform our criminal justice system. End over-policing of Black and Brown people. Abolish the death penalty. Dismantle the institutions that are rooted in white supremacy.

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No one should have to lose their life or be robbed of their future, Madam Speaker, because we didn't step up and fix our broken system. We know that is not justice.

Madam Speaker, 32 years ago, five young men from Harlem were robbed of their future, but alas they rose above and stand tall today as leaders, advocates, and activists fighting tirelessly to reimagine how we see justice in our country. They have given back to their communities and to our country, and we thank them for their perseverance, for using their voices for change and for coming here to this Capitol tomorrow.

I hope that we use this anniversary on both sides of the aisle as a reminder of how much work still needs to be done to transform our institutions to serve every single one of us.

HONORING JOANNE POWELL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PFLUGER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and sacrifice of Mrs. JoAnne Powell, a pillar of the San Angelo community and one of the most distinguished public servants in the U.S. House of Representatives.

JoAnne served the constituents of the 11th District of Texas for over 35 years in the San Angelo office. During this time, she solved thousands of cases with Federal agencies, helped thousands of people, and was the eyes and ears of the office on the ground and throughout our district.

Her pride and joy in mentoring hundreds of men and women who would later go to service academies truly changed our Nation and our military service. She trained four Congressmen over her tenure: TOM LOEFFLER, LAMAR SMITH, MIKE CONAWAY, and now myself. It has been a priceless honor to have her mentorship and her guidance as I begin my journey in Congress.

On top of her congressional service, the influence she and her beloved husband, Colonel Powell, have had on our community cannot be overstated. She married her childhood sweetheart, Charles Powell, in December 1954, just months after his graduation from the U.S. Naval Academy. Charles would go on to become a colonel in the U.S. Air Force and the two would take a long journey and a successful journey in service to this country before settling in San Angelo in 1980 when Colonel Powell became the wing commander of Goodfellow.

At that time, the base was scheduled for closure. Both Colonel Powell and